1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
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self and for his people, and shortly after conquered and slain by Cortez.

Let us now return to the superstitions of the Abipones, who think another star, the name of which I have forgotten, portentous, formidable, and destructive. They say that those years in which this star has been seen have always proved bloody and disastrous to their nation. When a whirlwind drives the dust round in a circle, the women throw ashes in its way, that it may be satisfied with that food, and may turn in some other direction. But if the wind rushes into any house with that impetuous whirling, they are certain that one of the inhabitants will die soon. If any live bees be found in the honey-comb, which they bring from the woods, they say that they must be killed out of doors, imagining, that if this be done within the house, they shall never be able to find any more honey.

The Abipones labour under many superstitions, because they abound in jugglers, the teachers of superstition. The most famous at the time that I lived there, were Hanetrâln, Nahagalkln, Oaikin, Kaëperlahachin, Pazanoirin, Kaachl, Kepakainkin, Laamamin, and Pariekaikin, the first, and by far the most eminent of them all, who had obtained a high reputation for his prophecies and other peculiarities of his office. Female jugglers abound to such a de-

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CHAPTER XXV.

OF THE RITES WHICH ACCOMPANY AND SUCCEED THE DEATH OF AN ABIPON.

DEATH is dreadful to most mortals, but particularly so to the Abipones. They cannot even bear the sight of a dying person. Hence, whenever any one's life is despaired of, his fellow inmates immediately forsake the house, or are driven away by the old women who remain to take care of the sick, lest they should be so affected by the mournful spectacle, that fear of death should make them shrink from endangering their lives in battle. They are, therefore, obliged to pass many nights in another person's tent, or in the open air. As they have very little experience of persons dying a natural death, they do not know the signs of it when it draws near. A short abstinence from food, unusual silence, or sleeplessness, makes them presage approaching dissolution. As soon as a report is spread that a man is dying, the old women, who are either related to the person, or famed for medical skill, flock to his house. They stand in a row round the sick man's bed, with dishevelled hair

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and bare shoulders, striking a gourd, the mournful sound of which they accompany with violent motion of the feet and arms, and loud vociferations. She who excels the rest in age, or fame for medical skill, stands nearest to the dying man's head, and strikes an immense military drum, which returns a horrible bellowing. Another, who is appointed to watch the sick man, removes every now and then the bull's hide with which he is covered, examines his face, and if he seems yet to breathe, sprinkles him plentifully with cold water, a jug of which is placed under the bed. When I first witnessed these things, I pitied the fate of the sick man, who, I feared, would be killed, if not by the disease, at any rate by the howling of the women and the noise of the drum, or else smothered by the weight of the hide, with which the whole body is covered, and which is as hard and as heavy as a board. Under the pretext of compassion, they use all this cruelty to the departing soul, that the women may be spared the sight of his last agonies, and the hearing of his groans.

If the respiration of the dying man be not heard at a distance like a pair of bellows in Vulcan's workshop, and if his breath stop even for a moment, they proclaim with a Stentorian voice, that he has given up the ghost. A great crowd assembles on all sides, exclaiming, he is dead,

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he is no more. All the married women and widows of the town crowd to the mourning, attired as I have described before, and whilst they are filling the streets with confused wailings, with the rattling of gourds and beating of pans covered with stags' skins, a sudden shout is often heard announcing, that the man whom they mourn for as dead is come to life again. The joyous exclamation, he is revived, is instantly substituted for the mournful howling of the women, some of whom return home, whilst others hasten to the miserable mortal on the confines of life and death, and torment him with their dreadful yellings, till at last they deprive him of life. After his death, the first business of the bystanders is to pull out the heart and tongue of the deceased, boil them, and give them to a dog to devour, that the author of his death may soon die also. The corpse, while yet warm, is clothed according to the fashion of his country, wrapped in a hide, and bound with leathern thongs, the head being covered with a cloth, or any garment at hand. The savage Abipones will not endure the body of a dead man to remain long in the house; while yet warm, it is conveyed on ready horses to the grave. Women are appointed to go forward on swift steeds, to dig the grave, and honour the funeral with la-